Capital Gleanings

Interesting Bits of Gossip from Washington—Story of Lady Townley's Part in Retirement of Durand Causes Surprise in Society Circles—Victory for "Uncle Joe."

WASHINGTON.—A sensation has been caused in official and social circles by the publicity given to the disclosure that the jealousy and sarcasm of Lady Susan Townley had a good deal to do with the retirement from Washington of British Ambassador Sir Mortimer Durand.

In the innermost diplomatic circles the Lady Townley affair has been known and discussed for some time. Now that it is in print the gossips are talking more freely, without disclosing additional incidents of interest, but confirming the almost intolerable conditions which marked Sir Mortimer's brief sojourn at the capital. Several tangible reasons are given for his recall.

Aside from the influence of Lady Townley, which is believed to have been considerable, in embarrassing the tenure of the ambassador, the British government probably found it desirable, for political reasons, to place in Washington some one more in harmony with government officials here and with the plans of the two governments to reach an agreement upon questions left open and unsolved by the joint high commission.

Secretary Root in addition to his great aspiration to promote relations with Latin-America, desires to mark his administration of affairs of state by a settlement of the Canadian questions. Sir Mortimer gave no enthusiastic support to the proposition advanced by Secretary Root, and in which the Canadians acquiesced, to submit the questions to representatives of Canada and the United States, one commissioner to be appointed by each.

Sir Mortimer has been an obstacle instead of a help in the negotiations. He has been reticent and retiring. He was altogether out of harmony with his surroundings, and his government knew it.

Aside from the Townley incident there was nothing more natural under the circumstances than that the British government, desirous of maintaining an equal footing with other nations at Washington, should want some one here more in sympathy. Sir Mortimer's recall can be placed to an accumulation of incidents, political as well as social, which marked him not the popular diplomat his two immediate predecessors were, and not as successful a representative as the British government needs at Washington.

Sir Mortimer has written a new novel. Its title and general character are known as yet only to a few personal friends, but it will soon be published. Sir Mortimer already has a novel of English life, "Marien Preveryn," to his credit as an author. It is his purpose, following his approaching retirement from public life, to devote his time to literary pursuits, which he enjoys, and for which long service as a soldier, a jurist and a diplomat has provided him much material.

Although it is not generally known, Sir Mortimer is a profound student in certain lines. He knows American history as few Americans know it, and possesses a splendid military knowledge of the campaigns of the civil war.

NO NICHE IN SENATE FOR ROOSEVELT BUST.

Whether the bust of President Roosevelt shall be set up along with the busts of others that have been vice presidents of the United States in the niches about the galleries of the senate chamber, or shall be forced to stand out in the loniliness of the main corridor, is an interesting question that will soon have to be disposed of.

Advices from New York are that the clay model of the bust to be executed in marble has been finished by James Earl Fisher, the sculptor.

The cutting of the bust will be finished this winter. The bust is intended to represent Mr. Roosevelt as one of the vice presidents. The theory is that each vice president shall be honored by having his bust in marble in the senate chamber, where it is possible to look down in solemn superintendence over the proceedings. When Mr. Roosevelt's bust is finished the only vice president that will not be represented by one will be Vice President Fairbanks. His will be executed later. But the embarrassing feature of the matter is that all the niches about the galleries are now filled. There seems to be no place for the bust of Mr. Roosevelt, except out in the corridor.

In view of the well-known antagonism between the president and various elements in the senate some might calculate that it would be a fine revenge to take on the president for his habit of shaking the big stick at the upper branch of congress to leave his bust out in the corridor and exclude it from the chamber.

Just how the matter will be settled it is too early to guess. The committee on rules will dispose of it. Possibly the bust of some one of the earlier vice presidents may be removed from its niche in the chamber and that of Mr. Roosevelt put in its place.

'UNCLE JOE" WINS SOCIAL VICTORY.

The president gave a dinner at the White House January 4 in honor of the speaker of the house of representatives.

Great significance attaches to this bit of news, for it means "Uncle Joe" has won out in the fierce feud waged between him and the chief justice of the United States supreme court over the question of precedence.

The speaker has kept away from White House dinners for two years, whenever there was any possibility of a conflict betweeen himself and the chief justice, as to which was entitled to the seat of honor nearest to the president.

The rivalry has been a matter of great embarrassment to the president, who is always in a quandary about the seating arrangement when his list of guests includes both the speaker and the chief justice.

Whenever the diplomatic corps is entertained, the president places the secretary of state at his right, and the dean of the diplomatic corps on his left. Ambassadors and ministers are then distributed down the line, which would bring Uncle Joe, if he were present, to a place at the foot of the table.

"Uncle Joe" always manages to have a dinner at his own home the night the president entertains the diplomatic corps and the supreme court. The announcement that the president was to give a dinner in honor of the speaker was important, therefore, to official and social Washington.

The Cannon dinner came before the dinner to the diplomatic corps and the supreme court affair. So "Uncle Joe's" victory is complete.

CHASE OF GAINES IN A REVOLVING DOOR.

"Waltz Me Around Again, Willie," has been changed to "Run Me Around Again, Johnnie," as the result of a bloodless and ludicrous affray between Representative John Wesley Gaines of Tennessee and a man in Washington who is known as a publicity agent.

As the story goes, Gaines and the publicity agent engaged in an altercation in the rotunda of a leading hotel which concluded in an invitation to Gaines to "step out on the sidewalk and take a licking." The alacrity with which the invitation was accepted somewhat discouraged Gaines' would-be antagonist, who led the way toward the street.

When a big revolving door leading into Pennsylvania avenue was reached the publicity agent's courage shrunk completely. Instead of passing into the street he calmly followed the door around in a circle, the irate Gaines at his heels. Around and around went the pursued and pursuer with ever-increasing velocity, each in his separate compartment, dragging his heels from under the door, following relentlessly upon his footsteps.

As the compartments flew by the open space leading into the hotel and into the street loud words resounded only to be muffled a moment later as the compartment sped into the "tunnel" on either side of the doorway. Finally Gaines is reported to have become exhausted from the chase, the publicity agent vanished and when the police arrived Gaines was found alone on the field of battle with a smoking revolving door in both hands.

SCIENCE AND INVENTION.

WINGED SEEDS.

How They Came to Be and the Reason for It.

We all know that seeds with "wings," such as those of the maple, are borne far by the wind and may thus take root in distant soil. In an article in The Plant World, we are told by Mr. H. Tullsen that this form of seed-vessel is of no special advantage to the trees at present, but was doubtless developed in some long-distant age when it was necessary for the propagation of the species that the seed should be carried over wide infertile spaces of some kind. He says:

"There are about 100 species of maples (Acer) and 40 species of ash (Fraxinus). All have winged fruits. We may be certain that this peculiar form of fruit was not developed independently in each of these numerous species.

"The direct action of the environment can have done nothing toward the development of the foliaceous fruits of the trees under consideration. It would be hard to conceive of any other factor than natural selection as having wrought to produce them. Natural selection, we know, can operate only where there prevails a fierce and keen struggle for existence. So, in some great struggle of the past, we may conclude that the production of winged seed-vessels, by insuring the wider territorial distribution of the trees that bore them, saved the ancestors of the maples, and those of the ash, from extinction.

"That this is true, it may at first be somewhat difficult to apprehend. The ashes and maples, it may be said, grow peacefully, and in their tranquil shade there is nothing that smacks of struggle. . . . But he who argues thus is thinking of present and local conditions only. Now let us look at one of these trees under another and a different environment. Upon the great Pine Ridge Indian Indian reservation in South Dakota, for example, are numerous streams and 'draws' or coulees (which are nothing more or less than ravines or gullies free of water except in time of flood and rain) which, as a rule, are far below the general surface of the adjacent country, and often miles from one another. Upon the flood-plains of such streams, and in the 'draws' grow ash trees and box-elders in company with trees of a few other species. Nowhere on the high, dry hills do they or any other trees, except pines, grow; although I have often found their wind-tossed samaras there; and if germination takes place, the seedlings are doomed to perish. Along the draws and other water courses all the various kinds of trees that grow in such places are crowded together in dense and tangled masses; wherefore it is to the advantage of a given species that its seeds shall be carried to a 'draw' or creek-plain where the chances of life are more favorable."

To show how these conditions might develop wings on a seedling, the writer supposes an ancestor of the trees bearing such seeds to be growing in an isolated "draw" amid vast barren hills. Its fruits, while wingless, may be supposed to produce occasionally a minute winglike appendage on the end or margin, as do many plants. The winds carry a few of the nascent key-fruits far away to the fertile soil of another flood-plain, as yet unpeopled by trees. Other seed-vessels, unable to fly far with the winds, perish in the tree-crowded coulee or

Winged Seeds of Ash and Maple.

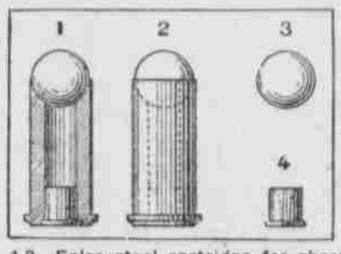
upon the barren hills. The trees that spring from the seeds of appendaged fruits will tend to produce this kind of seed-vessels themselves. Thus, in time, first a samaroid and later a fully-winged fruit will be evolved. To quote further:

"Easy conditions of life cannot have impelled the ashes and maples to develop key-fruits. Great difficulties have in the past been encountered, and the trees that were enabled to establish means of dissemination survived in the struggle for existence. But the barriers to be passed over may not have been in all, or even most cases hills. Sir John Lubbock finds that the only trees that bear winged fruits are forest trees, which fact would seem to indicate that such fruits in many instances have been evolved in order to be carried over vast tracts of dense woodland. But the theory here set forth remains unshaken, and is really thus supported, for the principle is the same.

"To sum up: It is certain that key-fruits were developed in a country where they became of far greater service to the trees which bore them than they appear to be to the ash trees and maples in many regions of our eastern United States and elsewhere. But I do not wish to insist that the barriers to be surmounted were necessarily hills. They may have been broad dry plains, or forest growths of other kinds of trees, or even bodies of water—it all depends upon the nature of the region where the changing form first grew."

Bloodless Dueling With Wax Bullets

Shooting at human targets merely for the sport derived from it and as a test of marksmanship; in other words, bloodless dueling or fencing with pistols, has been made possible through the invention by a Frenchman of a harmless wax projectile. This new diversion is really no more serious than fencing with swords, and



1,2—False steel cartridge for shooting new bullets.
3—Bullets of wax and suet, caliber 44.
4—Priming device.

has that spice of realism in it that tends to make any sport popular.

The new bullet is an ingenious device and required a great deal of experiment before being perfected. The situation was thus: A heavy projectile must necessarily have a wounding force, a light one loses its precision and a soft bullet will be changed in shape and describe an irregular trajectory; therefore a harmless projectile to be effective must differ from all these. The Frenchman's product is a spherical ball of wax and fat, with a small charge, and in tests 24 balls were lodged in succession in a rectangle 4 by five inches at 20 yards. At a six-day tournament held in the Tuileries the efficiency of the wax bullet was demonstrated.

The combatants wear thick screens for masks, with heavy glass over the eyes, and wear thick clothing to prevent bruising from the impact of the balls. The distance is 25 paces and the weapons are revolvers, held as seen in Fig. 1. The director of the combat, keeping his gaze fixed upon a metronome which beats 80 to 100 times a minute, makes the inquiry as in an actual duel, "Are you ready?" and when they reply "Yes!" the director, timing his words exactly to the beats of the pendulum, cries, "Fire—one—two—three!"

At the command "Fire!" the adversaries raise their weapons and shoot. The two shots must be made before the command "Three!" As the participants in these trials were experts they made a good average, hitting their man six or seven times out of eight shots. Although more than 1,600 balls were fired there was not the slightest accident.

The wax bullets can be used in apartments as well as in the open air, without the inconvenience of the lead ball of small caliber, says La Nature, which will probably lead to its introduction into the armies of the various nations for practice shooting.

China Making Progress

GREAT AWAKENING TO WESTERN IDEAS SURPRISES WORLD.

Is Adopting the Latest Inventions and Making Strides Toward Complete Modernization of Habits and Methods.

At last western ideas have penetrated the Chinese intelligence and the awakening is likely to be swift and of extraordinary importance to the world. The sleeping giant is rousing himself, and when he shakes the counterpane of the world the nations of Europe will do well to look to their supremacy. For behind the exclusiveness of the ages there lie forces that need only to be set in motion to become overwhelming. The China of to-day is not that of ten years ago.

Her army is undergoing thorough reorganization, and no longer will the Chinese approve their ancient proverb, "One does not take the best iron to make hooks, nor brave men for soldiers." Smart uniforms, modern weapons, and drill are now in use on every parade ground, and even the very small boys of the nation are under military instruction. The soldierly ideal is taking root, and these small cadets are said to give every promise of smartness and efficiency.

In industrial life it is the same. The printing press of the west has come to the land where the art was known long before Caxton. The Celestial compositor stands at European cases filling his stick, and in the machine rooms the most perfect presses driven by electricity are looked after by clever workmen who have learned their business in Europe. Thus the Chinaman of to-day receives his up-to-date newspaper.

On the railways Chinese officials drive the latest patterns of locomotives, which are sometimes built in China, or if not, are put together there by native artificers.

On the roads the motor car has made its appearance—not the antiquated machines that Europe has cast aside, but powerful new vehicles of from 20 to 30 horse-power. It is nothing uncommon to see the staid mandarin rushing along in his motor on business or pleasure. It is regrettable that the picturesque national costume is yielding to the top-hat and frock coat, but this penalty to progress has been paid by Japan, and China can hardly escape. The women of China do not adopt Paris fashions at home, but they do so not infrequently when they travel. Since they discovered that they must go abroad the awakening of China has become an accomplished fact. They send representatives to the French maneuvers, and have also some cadets under instruction at the French naval school. In this they are only following the lead of Japan. In every science they are becoming capable, and in the applied sciences their experts are to be met with everywhere.

Chinamen are now accomplished in the conduct of telephones, telegraph, and railway service. As engineers

The New Country Sport of Celestials.

they are sure to be successful, for the nation is proverbially ingenious and neat-handed. The Chinaman is patient, and although he is sly, he seldom scamps his work. There is little doubt that he will pick up the lessons of the west as quickly as the Japanese, and it remains one of the most important problems of the age what he will do with his knowledge once he realizes the power it bestows. The German emperor is uneasy about the future exploits of the Chinese army. He has a vision of the tide of yellow conquest rolling westward over Asia and Europe, and it would seem that he doubts whether even the "salt of the earth" will be able to withstand it. But the Chinaman is commercial; militarism does not attract him in the first instance, and he may, like Germany, decide for pacific aggression. The yellow man, indeed, has the ball at his foot. It is hard to say how far he will send it.

Big Battle with Ocean.

When it comes to measuring strength with the mighty ocean man has to bring all his ingenuity and skill and patience to bear to win the victory. And yet how often he has been victorious over the elements and planted his lighthouses in places where it was said that no human power could succeed. And although at first defeat and failure may be met with, as was the case in the fall of 1905 with the effort to sink a caisson in Chesapeake bay for the building of a lighthouse foundation, man generally persists and finally conquers.

There is a struggle going on at the present time off the mouth of the Magothy river, in Chesapeake bay, 20 miles from Baltimore, which is attracting the attention of the engineering world. As we have said, in the fall of 1905 a 972-ton caisson was floated to the spot, but before it could be sunk below the power of the waves it was caught by a northeaster and capsized, and now the struggle is on to right the immense wooden box. Early last spring, says the Scientific American, in telling of the beginning of the herculean task, after the ice had gone, the new contractors, who had been engaged by the surety company which was on the bond of the first contractor, began the erection of a pier on either side of the caisson. Owing to the formation of the bottom, which was of soft mud for a considerable depth, it was necessary to drive 100-foot piles, and by the first of August the piers, 40 feet wide and 120 feet long, were completed. There were then laid on the upper side ten 50-foot 12-inch square timbers, bolted securely. The ends of the timbers projected out over the iron cylinder, and the whole was firmly bound with wire cables. Then, on the after part of the caisson and resting on the foundation of the timbers, an A frame was erected. The frame is 55 feet high, and from the base there projected ten 70-foot weight arms, and to each of the latter there were swung 20 tons of pig lead, making a total of 200 tons. It was estimated that, by using the lower lip of the caisson as a fulcrum, the actual weight to be lifted would not exceed 500 tons, and it was estimated that the weights could be supplemented by derricks.

In order to obtain for the derricks as much of a purchase as possible, there were built two "sticks," each 70 feet long and 24 inches square, which the divers put in place through the central shaft in the caisson. From the ends of the "sticks" wire cables led to two great derricks, one on either pier.

When everything was in readiness the derricks were started, and slowly the caisson was raised until it is now in the position shown. It has been found that the weights have lost their effectiveness and the caisson, hanging at an angle of about 45 degrees, will come over no farther, although the derricks prevent it slipping back.

The contractors have rigged a powerful suction pump, and there is now in Baltimore a barge being fitted out with boilers and compressors, and the contractors are preparing to dredge away the mud from under the under lip and cause it to settle, keeping it in position by cables from the piers, and thus gradually bring it to an upright position. The caisson will then be sunk according to the original plans.

It is estimated that the completed lighthouse structure will be a concrete monolith weighing nearly 10,000 tons, and to withstand this strain and great weight it was necessary to have the caisson of great size and strength, and it ranks as the largest of its kind ever built.

The caisson was built in the harbor of Baltimore, and it is 48 feet square and 23 feet high. The first seven feet is entirely of wood, the smallest timber being 12 feet long and 12 inches square, while the largest is 48 feet long and 12 inches by 24 inches. There was considerable difficulty experienced in procuring the large timbers, and when they arrived in Baltimore they were the largest single sticks that had ever been seen in that port. The timbers in the caisson were laid in alternate layers, lengthwise and crosswise, each course being laid in pitch and the seams firmly calked. The structure is a bottomless box. It contains 1,100,000 feet of lumber, and it is bolted together with 26,000 spikes, ranging in length from 21 inches to 90 inches. On the lower lip of the caisson was placed a cutting edge of half-inch iron to assist it in biting its way through the bottom.

Cages for Larks.

At a police court recently a man was brought up for drunkenness.

The Magistrate—What did you want to get drunk for?

Prisoner—Oh, it was only for a lark.

"Oh!" answered the magistrate, smilingly, "we have cages for larks. Go in one for 14 days."—Royal Magazine.

Choice of Heroines.

The Maid—What is your favorite style of novel heroine?

The Man—Favorite style?

The Maid—Yes. Do you prefer one better than any woman could be or one that is no better than she ought to be?—Chicago Daily News.

Nothing Lost.

Nell—Mr. Gush is always using words that I don't understand at all.

Wise—Neither does he.—Detroit Free Press.

What He Needed.

Sapleigh—I—aw—would nevah mawry for money, doncher know, because I—aw—don't weally need it.

Miss Caustique—If you ever marry I suppose it will be for brains.—Chicago Daily News.

Enough for Him.

Dandy—So you were snowbound out west. How horrible!

Jim—Not much! The buffet car and two pretty girls were attached to the train.—Detroit Free Press.